

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend paragraph [21] as follows:

[21] In accordance with the present invention, various embodiments may be implemented to seal exposed sidewall pores, or smooth out the exposed pores in the sidewalls defining an opening formed in a porous interlayer dielectric. In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, a swelling agent is deposited to line the sidewalls of the opening followed by heating, as at a temperature of about 25°C to 200°C, thereby swelling the porous dielectric material such that the exposed sidewall porosity is reduced by virtue of the pores shrinking or collapsing. Various swelling agents for low-k dielectric materials are known; one such material is ~~called~~ used in the RELACSTTM process and available from Clariant located in Japan.